

Office of Professional Accountability
OPA COMPLAINT STATISTICS 2004-2006
Summary for the Police Accountability Review Panel
August 15, 2007

This report provides an overview of the complaints filed with the Office of Professional Accountability, and summarizes findings in closed investigations for 2004 through 2006. Data concerning the specific allegations raised in these complaints is provided, along with information concerning the number of officers with single and multiple complaints, and the average length of an investigation.¹

OPA Classifications of Complaints

Complaints received by the OPA-IS are classified into one of five categories: (1) OPA Investigation Section (IS) complaints are more complex and involve more serious allegations, including use of force allegations, and are investigated by OPA-IS. (2) Line Investigations (LI) complaints involving minor misconduct are investigated by the officer's chain of command. (3) Supervisory Referral (SR) complaints are those that, even if events occurred as described, signify a training gap instead of misconduct. The complaint is referred to the employee's supervisor for review, counseling, and training as necessary. (4) Preliminary Investigation Report (PIR) complaints involve conduct that would not constitute misconduct and is referred to the employee's supervisor for review. (5) The Contact Log (CL) classification is used for complaints that do not involve misconduct, but are requests for information, referrals, etc.²

A single complaint may involve more than one complaining party, multiple allegations, and/or more than one officer, though all relate to a particular police incident. The following chart shows the total number of complaints filed with OPA for 2004, 2005, and 2006.

¹ Data for this report was extracted from a published report, OPA Complaint Statistics for 2004 & 2005, Seattle Police Department annual reports, and the internal database (AIMS) used by OPA-IS. The OPA Complaint Statistics for 2004 & 2005 can be found at <http://www.seattle.gov/police/opa/Docs/200405%20Stat%20Report%20Report.pdf>. Annual report statistics for 2006 have not been published, but the data is included in this document.

² The precise definitions of these classifications vary depending on whether we use the SPD Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 1.117, or published OPA reports. Precise definitions will be incorporated into the Policy and Procedures manual currently under review.

Complaint Intake Against SPD Employees 2004-2006

Complaint Classification	2004	2005	2006
OPA-IS Investigations	163	174	147
Line Investigations	25	36	23
Supervisory Referrals	50	74	86
Mediation		3	13
Preliminary Investigation Reports	242	315	282
Contact Log	287	433	581
Total Complaints	767	1035	1132

OPA-IS & LI Allegations by Classification

The following two charts summarize the different types of allegations raised in complaints categorized as an OPA-IS or Line Investigation. Note that the total number of allegations will be higher than the total number of IS/LI complaints, as shown in the previous chart, because one complaint may contain multiple allegations.

Number and Types of Allegations for IS & LI cases for 2004 & 2005

Type of Allegation	2004	2005
Unnecessary Force	144	165
Conduct Unbecoming an Officer	74	80
Violation of Rules and Regulations	43	104
Misuse of Authority	9	9
Improper Language	21	30
Failure to Take Appropriate Action	22	21
Violation of Law	18	14
Mishandling Property or Evidence	14	21
Racial Profiling	8	11
Other	3	11
TOTAL	356	466

In 2006, allegations were redefined into 10 different categories:

Number and Types of Allegations for IS & LI cases for 2006

Type of Allegation	2006
Biased Policing	9
Communications/Confidentiality	1
Honesty	7
Integrity	10
Laws/Policy/Procedures	59
Rules/Expectations	9
Mishandling Evidence/Property	18
Professionalism	116
Secondary Employment	0
Unnecessary Force	133
TOTAL	362

OPA-IS & LI Findings

Below is a summary of findings for all IS and LI cases closed in 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Number and Types of Findings for IS & LI cases for 2004, 2005, & 2006

Findings	2004	2005	2006
Sustained	16	44	36
Unfounded	16	30	114
Exonerated	28	16	91
Not Sustained	16	30	52
Administratively Unfounded	9	5	16
Administratively Inactivated	2	1	6
Administratively Exonerated	0	1	0
Other	6	9	47

There are eight findings that can be used when closing completed cases. One case can have multiple findings. (1) A SUSTAINED finding means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence. (2) If a preponderance of the evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or is false there is an UNFOUNDED finding. (3) Where a preponderance of the evidence indicates the conduct alleged occurred, but the conduct was justified, lawful and proper, there is an EXONERATED finding. (4) If the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence, the result is a NOT SUSTAINED finding. (5) A finding made

prior to the completion of the investigation that the complaint is significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit; i.e., the complaint is false or the subject recants the allegations, preliminary investigation reveals wrong employee identified, or the employee's actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training is an ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED or (7) ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED finding. (8) If the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations, there is an ADMINISTRATIVELY INACTIVATED finding. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence.

SR Allegations

Supervisory Referral (SR) complaints are those that, even if events occurred as described, signify a training gap instead of misconduct. The complaint is referred to the employee's supervisor for review, counseling, and training as necessary. The following charts summarize the different types of allegations raised in complaints categorized as SR. Again, a single complaint may raise more than one allegation.

Number and Types of Allegations for Supervisory Referral (SRs) for 2004 & 2005

Type of Allegation	2004	2005
Rudeness	12	10
Violation of Rules and Regulations	6	20
Conduct Unbecoming an Officer	27	47
Misuse of Authority	3	1
Failure to Take Appropriate Action	9	14
Unnecessary Force	0	0
Mishandling Property or Evidence	1	0
Other	1	9
TOTAL	59	101

In 2006, allegations were redefined into 10 different categories

Number and Types of Allegations for Supervisory Referral (SRs) for 2006

Type of Allegation	2006
Biased Policing	7
Communications/Confidentiality	0
Honesty	0
Integrity	2
Laws/Policy/Procedures	14
Rules/Expectations	7
Mishandling Evidence/Property	3
Professionalism	100
Secondary Employment	1
Unnecessary Force	0
TOTAL	134

PIR Allegations

A complaint classified as a Preliminary Investigation Report (PIR) involves conduct that would not constitute misconduct and is referred to the employee's supervisor for review. PIRs are further categorized into 19 different subject matter categories, as summarized below.

Number and Types of Allegations for PIRs

#	Description	2004	2005	2006
1	Service Quality	71	87	87
2	Possible Mental Issues	38	28	36
3	Disputes Report/Citation	52	78	84
4	Biased Policing: Traffic	5	7	10
5	Biased Policing: Other	31	12	18
6	Attitude/Demeanor	57	81	91
7	Inquiry/Request/Referral	37	54	72
8	Discretion in Enforcement	38	50	37
9	Off-Duty Traffic Control	0	0	0
10	Demonstrations	2	0	1
11	Special Events	0	0	0
12	Sporting Events - SAFECO	1	0	0
13	Sporting Events - Seahawks	0	1	0
14	Sporting Events - Key Arena	0	0	0
15	Workplace Issues	3	3	7
16	Private Conduct	2	10	6
17	Traffic Violation by Officer	3	10	14
18	Search and Seizure	7	6	14
99	Other	4	22	7

Complaints per Officer

The following charts summarize information on the number of officers with single and multiple IS and LI complaints for 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Number of Officers with Single and Multiple Complaints (IS & LI cases only)

Officer Complaint Category	Number of Officers in 2004	Number of Officers in 2005	Number of Officers in 2006
Officers with one complaint	127	136	164
Officers with two complaints	32	40	34
Officers with three or more complaints	11	17	6
Total complaints	170	193	204

Using Strength Average @ 1250 officers
2004

- 86.4% of officers had no complaints
- 10.1% had 1 complaint
- 2.6% had 2 complaints
- 0.9% had 3 or more complaints

2005

- 84.6% of officers had no complaints
- 10.8% had 1 complaint
- 3.2% had 2 complaints
- 1.4% had 3 or more complaints

2006

- 83.6% of officers had no complaints
- 13.1% had 1 complaint
- 2.7% had 2 complaints
- < 1% had 3 or more complaints

Use of Force Complaints per Officer

The following chart notes the number of officers with single and multiple uses of force complaints for 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Number of Officers with Single and Multiple Use of Force Complaints

Officer Complaint Category	Number of Officers in 2004	Number of Officers in 2005	Number of Officers in 2006
Officers with one use of force complaint	76	73	90
Officers with two use of force complaints	16	30	18
Officers with three or more use of force complaints	9	7	4
Total complaints	101	110	112

Average Length of Investigations 2004-2006

Complainants and named officers have raised concerns about timeliness in the completion of investigations by OPA. OPA has responded to such concerns and the average length of time it takes to complete an investigation is dropping, as reflected below.

